

Auslander, Joseph

DRAWER 28

Poe

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Lincoln Poetry

Poets

Joseph Auslander

Excerpts from newspapers and other
sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Abraham Lincoln was ten feet tall,
He would straddle the mountains in one stride;
The shout of the wind and the waterfall
Would pound at his heart and open it wide.



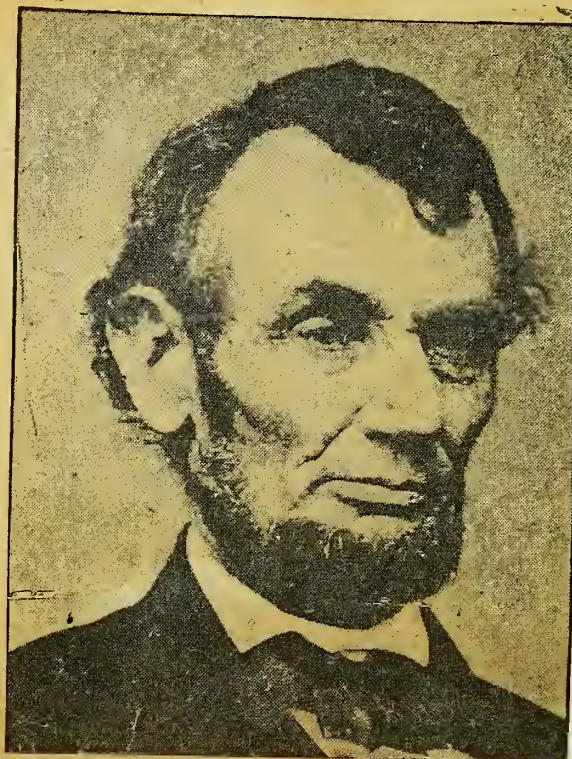
Abraham Lincoln was wilderness-bred,
The cliff and the cloud went into his bone;
There were blood and tears in the words he said;
He wept for the world—and he wept alone.



Abraham Lincoln wore a stovepipe hat
That brushed the stars down where he walked;
His eyes were terrible to look at,
His eyes were black pools when he talked.



Abraham Lincoln was Judah's Lion
In anger, in gentleness Judah's Lamb;
When he bared his breast to the Lord of Zion
That breast was the breast of Abraham.



Auslander, Joseph

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

"Abraham Lincoln was ten feet tall"

Auslander, Joseph

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

(Third stanza)

"Abraham wore a stovepipe hat"

"Lincoln Wore a Silk Hat"

JAMES S. MOONEY, New York City—Replying to F. V. V. in your issue of Dec. 17, the poem containing the line wanted is "Abraham Lincoln," by Joseph Auslander. The third stanza contains the lines wanted:

Abraham wore a stovepipe hat
That brushed the stars down where
he walked;
His eyes were terrible to look at,
His eyes were black pools when he
talked.

Miss Louella D. Everett, Boston, Mass., in sending her copy writes that the poem was published in the New York Herald Tribune Magazine Feb. 7, 1932. It begins: "Abraham Lincoln was ten feet tall he would straddle the mountains in one stride." Arthur Guiterman, New York City, answered this request.

N. Y. Times 1-28-34

Lincoln: 1947

By JOSEPH AUSLANDER

In anguish of your tortured soul
You prayed and lonely vigil kept;
You heard the cannon crash and roll,
You tossed, and quit your couch unslept,
And wept.

Now, when the world is one indeed,
On your compassionate spirit call
The nations in their hour of need:
Let your faith like a blessing fall
On all.

Instruct the Captains of our State
In courage and humanity;
Lift from our eyes the scales of hate,
That with your shining vision we
May see.

From the dark wisdom of your heart,
Schooled in grief's grave-eyed discipline,
Humility and hope impart,
That we a new world may begin
To win.



THE LIVING LINCOLN

by Joseph Auslander

He sleeps, the valiant shepherd sleeps, who led
The multitude of his bewildered sheep
From bondage into peace; he is not dead;
He has lain down a little while to sleep.
Ah, not for him the shouting and the glory,
The feast that follows triumph; in his mouth
Only the bitter taste of blood, the story
Without an end, the sorrow North and South.

The valiant shepherd of the flock is taken;
The Lord has plucked him from our midst away;
Now when our hearts again are sorely shaken,
Beset on all sides, for his faith we pray.
He moves among us; we are not forsaken;
His love still sheds a light upon our way.

"This Week" Feb 10 1952

WORDS TO LIVE BY



BETTMANN ARCHIVE

"It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here... to the great task remaining before us..."
LINCOLN'S GETTYSBURG ADDRESS

GIVE US YOUR DREAM...

by Joseph Auslander

Because you knew black nights of unbelief,
The sleepless agony, the stark despair,
Sustain us when we struggle with our grief,
Help us to find the strength you found in prayer.

Because, being human, you could understand,
And, being humble, could all faults forgive,
O take us like small children by the hand;
Teach us in truth and tolerance to live.

Give us your faith to fight for and to treasure;
Give us your dream to prove the soul's true worth —
The faith for which you gave the last full measure,
The dream that shall not perish from the earth.

Sidelines

CULTURE NOTE. February 10th marks the 116th anniversary of the death of Alexander Pushkin, great Russian poet, which reminds us of a true story. Recently Russia's "cultural" leaders announced that a prize would be given to the artist who created the best Pushkin statue. Competition was heavy among Russia's greatest sculptors.

At last the moment arrived when the winning statue would be unveiled. As the shrouds were drawn back, the spectators gasped — then dutifully applauded. Standing before them was not a statue of Pushkin — but of Stalin himself. But the dictator was reading a book — by Pushkin!

MIG'S MENACE. In a recent issue, Lt. James F. Low, of Sausalito, Calif., told his intimate personal story of achievement as a combat pilot after a dismal civilian life marked by failure and delinquency. Sent to Korea last May, he knocked down six enemy planes by July 4th, was sent back to the U.S. to talk to aircraft engineers. We are pleased to learn that this country's youngest jet ace, back in Korea, is still blasting at Red flyers. At present writing he has shot down his ninth!

COMING UP. For years, scientists have sought to solve the mysteries of cancer. Now, some of our most distinguished researchers predict (off the record) that they will reach a solution within 10 years. Next week, in his article, "In Ten Years — A Cure For Cancer," reporter John Pfeiffer gives up-to-date and hopeful news about this battle against one of mankind's most stubborn enemies. It's one of the most cheering articles you'll ever read.

Also next week: Singer Lawrence Tibbett tells about Gen. Jimmy Doolittle's first airplane flight (when he was a schoolboy); Mrs. John Eisenhower tells how to be a successful daughter-in-law; Actor Jean Hersholt tells about the true meaning and value of thrift; plus many other features. — THE EDITORS

This Week

THE SUNDAY MAGAZINE

WILLIAM I. NICHOLS, Editor

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THE CEREBROID.....	4
CAN AMERICA LIBERATE THE WORLD?.....	7
THEY RODE A GHOST PLANE.....	8
MOTHER GOES MODERN.....	10
TRY THESE TV STUNTS!.....	12
THE JON LINDBERGH STORY.....	14
HOW TO BE A MOTHER-IN-LAW.....	17
SHE'LL MAKE HISTORY!.....	18
PAIN IN THE NECK.....	23
WHAT'S WRONG WITH LOAFING?.....	26
FASHION FIND.....	30
FOOD FIND.....	35
QUIZ 'EM.....	36

Cover by Jerry Cooke

Names and descriptions of all characters in fiction stories and semi-fiction articles in this magazine are wholly imaginary. Any name which happens to be the same as that of any person, living or dead, is entirely coincidental. The title "This Week" is registered in the U.S. Patent Office.

FOR A BETTER AMERICA

A WALK WITH LINCOLN

By Joseph Auslander



When Abe had too much on his mind
(His spirit bent beneath the rod)
He left affairs of state behind
And went to walk with God.

He found Him in the lonesome hills,
The tranquil rock, the rooted oak;
He found Him in the faith that fills
The hearts of simple folk.

From wars and wild alarms of wars
Oh, come and have a quiet word
With Abe whose tall hat bumps the stars
Where he walks with the Lord.

☆ ☆ ☆

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Sent in by M. S. of Somerville

In a few lines, Joseph Auslander, under the heading, "*Give Us Your Dream . . .*," has caught the spirit of Abraham Lincoln:

Because, being human, you
could understand,
And being humble, could all
faults forgive,
O take us like small children
by the hand;
Teach us in truth and tolerance
to live.
Give us your faith to fight
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Abraham Lincoln

Joseph Auslander, in New York Herald-Tribune.

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In anger, in gentleness Judah's
Lamb;
When he bared his breast to the Lord
of Zion
That breast was the breast of
Abraham.

Abraham Lincoln dropped drops of
blood
In every battle, in every death:
He stood with the sentry in sleet
and mud,
And the soldier gasped with Abra-
ham's breath.

O heart of anguish, now when our
need
Of pity and peace in a dangerous
hour
Grows desperate, now when the
gospel of greed
Begets the crimson gospel of
power;

Now when the cynic corrupts the
soul,
And the bench is bought and we
laugh at laws,
And we barter the gold of the
aureole
And kill the god and betray the
cause—

O human heart, give us faith and
fire,
Help us believe—though against
the fashion—
To lift the world to your heart's de-
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To heal the world with your heart's
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POEMS WORTH READING
AGAIN

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And kill the god and betray the cause—

O human heart, give us faith and fire,
Help us believe—though against the fashion—
To lift the world to your heart's desire
To heal the world with your heart's compassion!

Auslander, Joseph

"Abraham wore a stovepipe hat"

DO YOU REMEMBER Joseph Auslander's:

*Abraham wore a stovepipe hat
That brushed the stars down when he walked;
His eyes were terrible to look at,
His eyes were black pools when he talked ...*

NANCY HANKS

BY JOSEPH AUSLANDER

*Being a mother was enough;
Being HIS mother, enough of glory;
Though a milk fever was to snuff
Your life out long before his story.*

*What shapes of cloud and cliff and shade,
What brooding of your Mother Heart
Went into him whom sorrow made
Most near of men, the most apart?*

*The wilderness groans through her earth,
The Fatal Sisters groan with her—
The ancient miracle of birth,
The cabin of the carpenter.*

*His father's brawn, the wistful spirit
Of his mother plot his chart;
These the Master shall inherit
To build his will—and break his heart.*

*The mother cord is cut—and yet
His eyes remember; still there clings
A silver fragment like regret,
And in his heart a throb like wings.*

*Now sleeps the Mother on the hill;
Somber and lonely and uncouth
The gaunt hands working at the mill
Cherish a ghost who taught him truth.*

*Through bitter years of blood and ashes,
Through final victory and death
Your love defends him, your love flashes
Like lightning, your breath is his breath.*

*Not clothed in silks at some event
Of state, nor in procession proud
As Mother of the President,
Flushed with the plaudits of the crowd—*

*At none of these; but only when
His anguished heart cries out, then only,
When he is loneliest of men,
When of all men he is most lonely,—*

*Then in the stillness of the night,
And in the struggle and the storm
That tears his soul, you are the light
To see by, the flame to keep him warm.*

*And when the radiant dark shape stands
Beside him, it is you he sees
With your eyes, your unearthly hands
He feels upon his eyes, your peace.*

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Lincoln's Letter to Mrs. Bixby

Washington, 21 November 1864

Dear Madam: I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant-General of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle. I feel how weak and fruitless must be any words of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering to you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic they died to save. I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.—Abraham Lincoln.

MRS. BIXBY

*Five sons on the altar!
Five sons to save
A dream from the halter
Of the slave!
You did not falter:
You gave—and gave!*

*Hannah beheld
Her seven sons
Like green trees felled—
And groaned not once:
Her lips were nailed,
Her eyes were stones.*

*You are the breed
Of every Hannah,
Whose heart, though it bleed,
Trumpets Hosanna;
Whose braveries feed
The soul with manna.*

*In the last war,
As in the first,
Though many swore*

*And many cursed,
The mothers bore,
With you, the worst—*

*Bore without show,
With shining eyes,
The bitter blow,
The sacrifice;
Bore it so,
Not otherwise.*

*Give them a cause
That calls for living,
They will not pause
For grief or grieving;
Beyond applause,
Past all misgiving.*

*You have no singers,
You so unsung—
O glory-bringers,
Accept my tongue
When the darkness lingers
And the heart is wrung!*

BY JOSEPH AUSLANDER

Lincoln's Lyric Prose

—By Joseph Auslander—

IF we may precisely define the artist as one possessing skill in producing the beautiful and gratifying taste, we may see that Abraham Lincoln qualified under this designation. We do not allude here to his verse-writing, which in most instances would be classed as doggerel, but to the more fundamental imagery that runs through his lyric prose. He was a painter of verbal pictures. As he looked at the delicate yet sturdy outline of a leafless tree against the sky he pondered on it saying:

"Perhaps a man's character is like a tree and his reputation like its shadow; the shadow is what we think of it; the tree is the real thing."

Lincoln loved to quote familiar lines, and one of these was:

"I have heard the moon's singing
Her love song to the morn;
I have seen the dewdrop clinging
To the rose just newly born."

"Having experienced that," said Lincoln, "a man carries about all the beauty of God's world in his remembrance."

* * *

LINCOLN'S identification with the sick and the wounded on the battlefield made him decry war. Dr. L. Pierce Clark, in his *"Psychobiography of Lincoln,"* gives this interpretation in which another phrase of infinite beauty used by Lincoln is recorded:

"Lincoln never glorifies war, nor is he the least desirous of being looked upon as a militarist. Rather, he leaves a record of compassion not to be excelled for the pardoning of individual dereliction. 'Let us beware of military glory,' Lincoln cautions. 'It is a rainbow made of drops of blood. Like the fascination of the serpent it charms only to destroy.' His spiritual sword is tempered so that it will not hurt warm flesh, nor set to flowing the blood of humankind. His acts of mercy are distrusted at the time, for opposing passions are blinded to these emanations from his great spirit. It is safe to say that his inexorable conscience causes him to suffer untold agonies in the countless deaths of his countrymen."

How was it possible for Lincoln to play such a wide orchestration on the keyboard of life? He strained its range of emotional feeling to the utmost—nearly to the point of an irreparable break; his mental type lends this possibility, as Dr. Clark shows. Then, too, Lincoln was a master of oratory—not in that grand delivery known as the oral aspects of oratory, but in placing his ideas on such a fiery background that few could withstand appeal.

* * *

YET how near to no fruition at all did Lincoln come; had he remained in retirement after his political collapse in Congress he would have been unknown except to the few.

Alas, how tragic is the run of life! Lincoln, poet and creative artist in verbal tones of deep emotions, might have lived and died on his pastoral prairies unsung, a lost or muted chord. Yet the Eighth Judicial Circuit would have known him in both these categories of a genius-type. The common people do not forget, and there burns forever his immortal mirth, his wit, his poetry, and those deep cavernous eyes that fathomed all living simple things.

